



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

Democracy and Governance

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PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

Election candidates broadcast their messages to fans gathering in public places. The campaigners addressed large crowds in Kabul. USAID provided substantial funding and training to prepare Afghan citizens and candidates to participate in free and fair elections.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE SNAPSHOT

- Facilitated the successful Emergency and Constitutional Loya Jirgas in 2003 and 2004 as part of the Bonn Agreement.
- Supported the process which culminated in the successful 2004 presidential elections.
- Constructed 27 judicial facilities to date.
- Built the institutional capacity of the Supreme Court as they are now drafting and will implement a training plan for all MoJ staff.

OVERVIEW

USAID's Democracy and Governance program supports the establishment of a functioning, democratic system of government, helping create a broadly accepted national government that can promote national unity, reduce the propensity for inter-group conflict and curtail the role of extremists. USAID accomplishes this through supporting the electoral process, re-establishing and institutionalizing the rule of law, facilitating local government reform, assisting with the establishment of a functioning legislative branch of government, and fostering the development of a viable civil society.

PROGRAMS

INCREASED CAPACITY IN THE FORMAL JUSTICE SECTOR

USAID's rule of law program works to decrease obstacles to citizens' access to the formal court system, increase the professionalism of judicial sector personnel, and strengthen the capacity of critical judicial institutions. It also establishes linkages between formal and traditional or informal judicial systems to lend additional credibility to the latter and ensure that human rights, especially the rights of women, are protected. Thus far, the program has:

- Constructed 27 courthouses in 18 provinces with 8 more under construction.
- Built the institutional capacity of the Supreme Court as they are now drafting and will implement a training plan for all Ministry of Justice staff.
- For the first time in the history of Afghanistan, a single compendium of Afghanistan's laws has been published and sent to all courthouses countrywide.

STRENGTHENED ELECTION AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

This initiative aims to assist Afghanistan with the creation of permanent electoral institutions, enabling the Government of Afghanistan to carry out valid, acceptable elections with its own resources and expertise. It also helps political parties and candidates to understand how to compete in elections, to form coalitions and to operate in a multi-party system. This is accomplished through intensive training and technical assistance to the permanent election commission and its staff, training to political parties and candidates to assist them in campaigning and organization, civic education to increase citizens' understanding of democracy and the electoral



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PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

An Afghan woman shows her registration card while waiting to vote for Parliamentary and Provincial Council representatives. Of the 6.8 million Afghans who voted in the September 2005 elections, 43 percent were women.



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

An Afghan man reads a ballot to help him vote for Afghanistan's National Assembly and Provincial Council Elections in Kabul. USAID provided critical funding for the process that supported voter registration and election efforts.

process, and support to logistics, operations and security surrounding electoral events. The program has:

- Provided training and support to the candidates, political parties, election commission and media in the successful 2005 parliamentary elections. Currently, USAID is training the new National Assembly and key provincial government actors.
- Supported the successful 2004 presidential elections and 2005 parliamentary elections through voter registration, voter education, logistics and security arrangements at polling stations.
- Facilitated the successful Emergency and Constitutional Loya Jirgas in 2003 and 2004, by providing logistical support and assistance to the Constitutional Commission.

INCREASED PRESENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

USAID supports programs to promote the development of a strong and active civil society, with an emphasis on women-focused organizations, providing technical training and grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) throughout the nation to help them achieve their organizational objectives. The program is also assisting the government and CSOs to draft new legislation to create an enabling environment for the development of the voluntary sector. To date, the program has:

- Selected eight regional Afghan organizations to help implement grass-roots capacity-building activities.
- Drafted, in collaboration with the government, an improved version of the newly decreed CSO Law.

STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

USAID is actively working with the GOA to support the new National Assembly, the country's first ever, truly multi-party legislature. In addition, USAID is helping to define the structures of provincial government, which consists of the administration, the Governor, and the elected councils. Currently, while there is a provincial government code to define these structures and their authorities, the relations with communities, traditional governance and adjudication bodies (shuras and jirgas), lower level district councils, the National Assembly and the government in Kabul remain undefined. Once the GOA establishes such relationships, the USAID sponsored training program will help new administrators and councilmen handle their tasks more effectively, resulting in better delivery of public services.

On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.